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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6450

<http://indian.senate.gov>

August 16, 2007

The Honorable Alberto R. Gonzales  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
Main Justice Building, Room 5137  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Gonzales:

I write to request a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss some urgent law enforcement issues in Indian Country. There is a public safety crisis on our Nation's Indian reservations. I hope we can include in our meeting several Indian leaders to hear their stories and, with them, develop solutions to improve public safety and criminal justice in Indian Country.

As you know, crimes rates are falling for most communities across America. However, violent crime continues to rise at alarming rates on Indian lands. Of particular concern to me is the violent victimization of Native women. Amnesty International reported in April of this year that 1 in 3 Native women will be raped in their lifetimes. This is not news. Your Department reported these very statistics a decade ago.

One of the largest barriers to public safety is the lack of law enforcement personnel to patrol Indian country. There are fewer than 2000 federal and tribal law enforcement officers that patrol more than 56 million acres of tribal lands in 35 States to enforce federal laws. A number of these reservations, particularly those in the Great Plains, are larger than the size of the State of Delaware. Because of the remoteness and the lack of personnel, it often takes hours for an officer to answer a call. Too often, when these officers are able to answer the call, they do so without backup. They drive into areas of the reservation where they lose radio connection. And too often they don't return.

The United States, specifically the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice, have a statutory obligation to provide public safety in Indian country. Sadly, we are not meeting this obligation. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss solutions that can be implemented by Congress and your Department to address this urgent problem. Please have your staff contact Christy Beach at 202-224-3337 to arrange the meeting.

Sincerely,



Byron L. Dorgan  
United States Senator